

¡viva venezuela!

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Venezuela

the Revolution Continues

Also inside: ■ Tributes to Hugo Chávez and his Legacy

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**Venezuela
Solidarity
Campaign**



Venezuela's Right-Wing Opposition Seeks to Override the Democratic Will of the People

The death of Hugo Chávez earlier this year was a huge loss for supporters of social justice the world over.



“Like Hugo Chávez before him, Nicolas Maduro also faces attempts to undermine his presidency - with the ultimate aim being to oust the government.”

He had done more than any previous leader to transform the lives of millions of Venezuelans for the better. His ideas also spurred similar movements across Latin America in a huge reawakening of the continent.

At every stage he faced huge opposition from Venezuela's old elite that had lost its economic and political privilege and from the United States.

Former trade unionist and Minister of Foreign Affairs Nicolas Maduro now has the task of continuing the incredible work of transforming Venezuela from the country dominated by human rights abuses, economic chaos and social squalor that Hugo Chávez inherited in 1998.

Like Hugo Chávez before him, Nicolas Maduro also faces attempts to undermine his presidency - with the ultimate aim being to oust the government.

After Maduro won the Presidential election by 51% to 49%, Henrique Capriles called for his supporters to “discharge their anger” against “fraud”.

This they truly did. At least nine government supporters and two children died in opposition violence. Petrol bombs damaged public health facilities. Attacks were made on the homes of political leaders' families and electoral authority representatives.

Now the right-wing opposition is seeking international support for its baseless claim of fraud and is being emboldened by Washington. Before the election had even taken place the US Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs said that it's not possible to have free and fair elections in Venezuela - she said this despite all the evidence to the contrary including former US President Jimmy Carter calling Venezuela's electoral system the “best in the world”.

Since the results were announced Washington has continued its hostility. The US is the only major government not to recognise the election results. In sharp contrast, the UK along with France, Spain, Portugal and others in Europe were quick to accept the results as were those across Latin America.

There is no basis for the claims of fraud. In the aftermath of the election, Capriles demanded a full recount, yet when a full audit was granted he said he wouldn't recognise it! The results of the full audit show that the margin of error was just 0.02%. Of the 15 million votes cast there was just a 775 vote difference in the recount! Maduro's lead remained at over 240,000 votes.

Instead of accepting the election results the opposition have simply resorted to ever more fantastical claims. Perhaps the most extraordinary is that dead people had voted and swung the election. Yet the opposition had signed off an audit of the electoral registry before the election!

All of these smears are simply the latest attempt by Venezuela's right-wing opposition to override the will of the people.

It has done this several times in the last 14 years. There was the coup in 2002 and then in 2003 economic sabotage aimed at ousting the elected government. Other times it has refused to recognise the results when it lost or has pulled out on the eve of elections when it was clear it would lose. Its behaviour is consistently anti-democratic.

Venezuela's right-wing opposition has repeatedly expressed a total disregard for the will of the people to decide their own future. It is showing this again. Supporters of social progress have an important role to play in telling the truth about Venezuela's election campaign and supporting the work of the VSC.

This magazine is published by the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign

Contributors to this issue were:

- Lee Brown
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Venezuela Solidarity Campaign



Audit of 100% of the Votes Fully Confirms Maduro's Election

In June, Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) announced that they had finished the final phase of audits demanded by opposition candidate Henrique Capriles, following his refusal of the April 14th election results.



The CNE found 99.98% accuracy; having counted all of the paper receipts issued by electronic voting machines, and checked them against the digital records. CNE President Tibisay Lucena, called the election of President Maduro "a faithful reflection of the sovereign will of citizens." These procedures were performed by the CNE in order to keep the peace following right-wing opposition demands for a recount, despite the initial audit being declared "statistically decisive" by experts at the US think-tank CEPR as the first audit was carried out on the day of the election, and saw 53 percent of voting machines checked on site, in the presence of

observers from both campaigns, plus witnesses from the international community, notably UNASUR and the Inter-American Organisation of Electoral Councils.

Since then, the opposition failed to participate in the additional audits as witnesses, and have attempted to discredit the CNE, despite stating they will participate in the recently announced municipal elections in December 2013. In total, there were 18 audits held before, during and after the election that were conducted in the presence of witnesses from different political parties. There was not one single instance of irregularity registered by any of these witnesses.

Second Anniversary of Successful Housing Programme

This summer marks the two year anniversary of Venezuela's 'Great Housing Mission' ('Mision Vivienda') which has seen the construction of 374,781 houses and apartments, benefiting approximately 1.5 million citizens.

It came after decades of under-investment in the sector by previous neoliberal governments. Now, President Maduro has committed himself to continuing the program, stating that 'Mision Vivienda' builds not just houses but communities.

The current goal is 380,000 more homes for 2013 alone, and 3 million in total before 2019.



Maduro Completes Successful Tours in Latin America and Europe

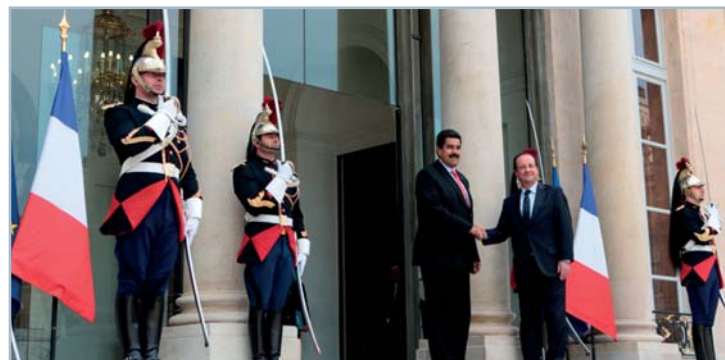
In his first overseas tour following his election, Nicolas Maduro visited Latin America's 'southern cone,' namely Venezuela's fellow members of the Mercosur regional trade group Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

Uruguayan President José Mujica was the first to welcome him, and praised Venezuela's new role in the regional trade group.

President Maduro then arrived in Argentina, where he met with President Cristina Kirchner Fernández, who announced 11 accords promising more cooperation on energy, technology, transportation and food.

Maduro then wrapped up his tour in Brazil where President Dilma Rousseff told him "we wish you great success with your presidential mandate and with your government," adding that Brazil and Venezuela "have a crucial role to play in the process of regional inclusion."

Following this in late June-early July Maduro got a warm welcome by Pope Francis I before visiting Europe in a tour he said produced "excellent results," including to hold meetings with the Presidents of Portugal and France, where co-operation agreements were signed in areas such as the development of industry and technology.



Nicolas Maduro with French President Francois Hollande and with Argentina's President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner



Paying Tribute to Hugo



Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, President of Venezuela, died in March after a long and hard battle against cancer. He was 58 years old.

He led the progressive transformation of Venezuela by lifting millions of its citizens from poverty; standing against social exclusion, marginalisation and institutional repression.

Under President Chávez's leadership, his government's policies improved the life of ordinary Venezuelans as no other government had ever done in the history of that South American nation. Chávez also played a leading role in the transformation of Latin America into a progressive continent.

A banner for the RMT (Rail, Maritime and Transport) union. It features the RMT logo on the left. The text reads: "No to US Intervention! Support the Venezuelan people!" and "For Peace & Social Progress!". Below the text is a photograph of a diverse group of people, many wearing red shirts, standing together. At the bottom, the website "www.rmt.org.uk" is listed on the left, and the names "Bob Crow General Secretary" and "Peter Pinkney President" are listed on the right.

RMT No to US Intervention!
Support the Venezuelan people!

For Peace & Social Progress!

www.rmt.org.uk

Bob Crow
General Secretary

Peter Pinkney
President

Ban Ki-moon

UN Secretary-General

"President Chávez was one of those leaders who made a difference in his country, the region and the world. His sense of solidarity with the most vulnerable and his commitment to improve the life of the most underprivileged resulted in a fierce attachment to the Millennium Development Goals."



Chávez and his Legacy

Sean Penn

Actor

"I lost a friend in Hugo Chávez and poor people around the world lost a champion."



Michael Moore

Film producer

"54 countries around the world allowed the US to detain (and torture) suspects. Latin America, thanks [to] Hugo Chávez, was the only place that said no."



Hugo Chávez will continue to symbolise, for decades to come, the aspirations of dignity, sovereignty, justice and a better life as fully empowered citizens, for people all around the world.

He showed that a better world could be constructed. On these four pages of 'Viva Venezuela' the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign shares just a handful of the many tributes that have been made to Hugo Chávez and his legacy.

Jimmy Carter

Former US President and Nobel Prize Winner

"Mr Chávez will be remembered for his bold assertion of autonomy and independence for Latin American governments."



National Solidarity Event Marks Hugo Chávez's Legacy

April 27th saw approaching 300 people pack the University of London Union for the fourth VSC national conference; 'Venezuela, Hugo Chávez's Legacy and The threat of Right-Wing Destabilisation'.

The day was opened by VSC Chair Colin Burgon, who spoke of Chávez's "towering legacy" and told us how plans were laid by Venezuela's right-wing opposition and the US to reject April 14th election results well ahead of the vote.

The day featured two plenaries and a series of nine informative workshops, with presentations by a number of Venezuelan speakers, academics, MPs and our friends in the trade union movement.

These included several speakers who had acted as international observers at the October 2012 and April 2013 elections: Andy de la Tour, Adrian Weir and Diane Abbott MP, who gave eye witness reports affirming the free and fair nature of the Venezuelan electoral system.

We also heard from Jeremy Corbyn MP, who reminded us of the coming 40th anniversary of the coup in Chile, as a striking reminder of the need for solidarity across Latin America.

The final plenary was an emotional tribute to Chávez with speakers including Jody McIntyre, Richard Gott and Seamus Milne, who concluded that, having shown an alternative to neo-liberalism is possible, "Maduro and the Chavistas are being attacked not for their failings but because of their successes in the US' backyard".



Diane Abbott MP speaks

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Gabi Zimmer

Chair of the European United Left Group in the European Parliament

"Hugo Chávez constantly defended social justice, greater Latin American integration, and peace. His fight for the oppressed, hit by an insatiable and ruthless global economic system, earned and continues to earn him the enmity of the powerful, but also the unwavering support of his people and the oppressed, as well as [all] people working to make the world a more viable and better place for all."



Grahame Morris MP

Labour Friends of Venezuela

"Hugo Chávez was a true champion of the people."

Jon Trickett MP

Labour Shadow Minister

"I met Chávez in London. A Titan of a man. Progressive, democratic, garrulous. In turbulent times he made change happen for the poorest."

Jeremy Corbyn MP

"Thanks Hugo Chávez for showing that the poor matter and wealth can be shared. He made massive contributions to Venezuela and the world."

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GMB supports **democracy** &
social **progress** in Venezuela
and the work of the
Venezuela Solidarity Campaign



Tim Roache REGIONAL SECRETARY Dave Noble REGIONAL PRESIDENT

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**Supports the Venezuela
Solidarity Campaign**



Billy Hayes General Secretary Jane Loftus President

Chris Williamson MP

"Hugo Chávez showed that a better world could be constructed."

Frances O'Grady

TUC General Secretary

"During his 14 years as President Hugo Chávez oversaw the implementation of an impressive and highly progressive programme, lifting millions out of poverty and providing citizens with healthcare and education services at a level unknown in Venezuelan history."



Dave Prentis

UNISON, General Secretary

"Hugo Chávez will be remembered for his continuous struggle to raise up the poor, his commitment to social justice and his dedication to fairness and equality."

Len McCluskey

Unite the Union, General Secretary

"Hugo Chávez embodied and represented a people who refused to accept that grinding poverty and social exclusion could be tolerated while massive wealth was stockpiled in the hands of a few. The Bolivarian Revolution is a massive inspiration for all those engaged in the fight for social justice and who believe that another world is possible."



Billy Hayes

CWU, General Secretary

"Hugo Chávez helped to inspire a new socialism for the 21st century and provided the spark that lit up the whole south American continent, as people awoke from many years of cruel and brutal military dictatorships to elect new, progressive governments throughout Latin America."



**Congratulates
Nicolas Maduro on his victory
Chávez and the Bolivarian
revolution live on**

Len McCluskey, General Secretary
Tony Woodhouse, Chair of GEC

www.unitetheunion.org



**Unite North West
stands in
Solidarity
with the people
of Venezuela**

Mick Whitley,
Regional Secretary

Terry Abbott,
Regional Chairperson

Len McCluskey,
General Secretary

Tony Woodhouse,
Chair, Unite Executive Council

www.unitetheunion.org



¡viva venezuela!

£1000 Needed for VSC to Meet Its Fundraising Target for 2013 – Can you support us today?

In light of the enormous expansion in interest in Venezuela in recent months, and the increased workload both around Nicolas Maduro's election in April, VSC launched an emergency fundraising appeal in the Spring to raise an additional £5000 for the expansion of the campaign's activities.

At the time of writing, we have raised £4008 towards this appeal, meaning that another 50 donations of £20 would mean we met our target and can continue to expand our information, lobbying and campaigning work.

Recent months have seen VSC co-ordinate statements of leading figures from across British society in defence of Venezuela's national sovereignty, regularly challenge media disinformation, hold a series of well-attended public meetings and cultural events, organise the successful national conference on Hugo Chávez's legacy and much more.

All of this would not be possible without your support – please give what you can today!

Venezuela Solidarity Campaign Emergency Appeal

- You can donate online today at www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk or by sending a cheque made out to 'Venezuela Solidarity Campaign' to VSC c/o PO Box 56210, London, N4 4XH.

Join the VSC

- If you join VSC online at: www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk for only £18 you receive a free DVD of Oliver Stone's *South of the Border*. You can also join by cheque for £18 (£9 unwaged) to Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, c/o PO Box 56210, London N4 4XH



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